

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 03252 020722Z
ACTION EA-12

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R 020552Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9084

UNCLAS BANGKOK 3252

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, CVIS, SGEN, TH
SUBJ: THAI ADOPTION LAWS AND PROCEDURES

REF: STATE 023204

1. EMBASSY DOES NOT RECOMMEND THAT INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN ADOPTING THAI CHILDREN TRAVEL TO THAILAND TO SEEK A CHILD. ALL FOREIGN ADOPTIONS MUST BE PROCESSED THROUGH THAI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE BEFORE ADOPTION CAN BE REGISTERED OR PASSPORT ISSUED BY THAI GOVERNMENT. SUCH PROCESSING REQUIRES SEVERAL MONTHS AS WELFARE DEPARTMENT CONDUCTS THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF ADOPTING PARENTS AS WELL AS CHILD PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION. AFTER INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED, WELFARE DEPARTMENT REQUIRES PERSONAL INTERVIEW OF ADOPTING PARENTS PRIOR TO DECISION PERMITTING OR DENYING FOREIGN ADOPTION. IN RECENT MONTHS A LIMITED NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED WITH ASSISTANCE OF HOLT INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES, P.O. BOX 2880, EUGENE, OREGON, AND FRIENDS FOR ALL CHILDREN IN COLORADO.

2. WELFARE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO CORRESPOND DIRECTLY WITH PROSPECTIVE PARENTS REGARDING POSSIBLE CHILD PLACEMENT. DIRECT GOVERNMENT PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WOULD PREVENT MARKETING OF THAI CHILDREN WHICH THAI GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO ELIMINATE, FOLLOWING SEVERAL EXPOSURES IN 1977, AND MIGHT RESULT IN MORE EXPEDITIOUS PROCESSING. ALTHOUGH THIS WILLINGNESS HAS BEEN EXPRESSED BY THAI OFFICIALS, EMBASSY
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MUST CAUTION INTERESTED PARTIES THAT, AS OF YET, WE HAVE NO EXPERIENCE WITH SUCH ADOPTIONS BEING ARRANGED AND ARE UNCERTAIN WHETHER WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL ACTUALLY CONDUCT DIRECT FOREIGN PLACEMENT PROGRAM. ISSUE OF FOREIGN ADOPTIONS IS SENSITIVE AND ULTIMATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF THAI GOVERNMENT ARE NOT YET SETTLED. EMBASSY ADVISES PROSPECTIVE PARENTS TO WRITE DIRECTLY

TO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE, KRUNG KASEM ROAD, BANGKOK, HOLT FOUNDATION, OR FRIENDS FOR ALL CHILDREN TO INITIATE ADOPTION

APPLICATION.

3. FOR DEPARTMENT'S BACKGROUND ON THAI ADOPTION ISSUE, DURING LAST FEW YEARS THAILAND ACQUIRED REPUTATION AS PLACE WHERE BABIES COULD BE BOUGHT FOR FOREIGN ADOPTION. SEVERAL PRIVATE AGENTS ENJOYED LUCRATIVE BUSINESS MEETING WORLDWIDE DEMAND FOR ADOPTABLE CHILDREN. IN MAY 1977, FOLLOWING CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY ABOUT BABY MARKETING, MOSTLY TO WESTERN EUROPE, AS WELL AS HOMICIDE OF THAI CHILD BY ADOPTIVE MOTHER IN NEW JERSEY, THAI INTERIOR MINISTRY AUTHORIZED PUBLIC WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO SUPERVISE ALL FOREIGN ADOPTIONS PENDING ENACTMENT OF NEW LEGISLATION. DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF WELFARE DEPARTMENT, MRS. RENU JOTIDILOK, MADE USG-SPONSORED TOUR OF U.S. IN AUGUST 1977 TO STUDY AMERICAN ADOPTION PROCEDURES. ENACTMENT OF NEW LEGISLATION HAS BEEN DELAYED BY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT BUT ACTING ON GRANT OF SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY, ADOPTION CENTER COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERIOR, AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. COMMITTEE REVIEWS ADOPTION APPLICATIONS FILED WITH WELFARE DEPARTMENT. ADOPTIONS ARE NOW BEING HANDLED ON CASE-BY-BASE BASIS. DURING PAST FOUR MONTHS OF FOUR ADOPTION CASES GOING TO U.S., THREE WERE HANDLED BY HOLT AGENCY AND FOURTH BY FRIENDS FOR ALL CHILDREN (FFAC). DURING DECEMBER 1977, VISIT TO CONSULAR SECTION, FFAC DIRECTOR, WENDY GRANT, EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT

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THAT WELFARE DEPARTMENT CONTINUED TO REQUIRE EACH APPLICATION TO BE PROCESSED INDIVIDUALLY RATHER THAN ALLOW SELECTED AGENCIES BLANKET AUTHORITY TO PLACE THAI CHILDREN IN U.S. WE BELIEVE HOLT AND FFAC CAN STILL PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN FACILITATING SUITABLE ADOPTIONS BUT FFAC MAY CONSIDER CURRENT REGULATIONS TOO RESTRICTIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING.

4. FOR ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND SEE FOLLOWING 1977 TELEGRAMS: BANGKOK 28641 (FOR TEXT OF DIPLOMATIC NOTE DESCRIBING PROCEDURES), BANGKOK 24836, BANGKOK 24331, BANGKOK 20984, BANGKOK 19595, BANGKOK 13972; ALSO SEE BANGKOK 31337, BANGKOK 30763, BANGKOK 30761, BANGKOK 29267, BANGKOK 25544, BANGKOK 20553, BANGKOK 17563, BANGKOK 14349, BANGKOK 14251, AND NUMEROUS MEMORANDA, AS WELL AS COPIES OF RESPONSES TO CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS WHICH WERE SENT TO VISA OFFICE DURING PAST EIGHT MONTHS.

WHITEHOUSE

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